

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STATE

FEBRUARY 2010

MAGAZINE



Honoring Those Who Serve



2009
Awards Day
and
FSN of the Year

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Debunking Common Civil Service Myths

I am serious about Civil Service career development at State and have appreciated the opportunity to hear from civil servants about their interests and concerns over the past several months. We clearly have more work to do and I will be looking for your input. In the meantime, I wanted to correct the record on two commonly held myths about the Civil Service at State.

Myth #1: Fewer women are being selected for SES positions.

Fact: Six career Senior Executive Service positions were filled in 2009. Of these, four were women and two were men. That said, women remain in the minority in State's SES ranks (35 percent). While we continue to develop opportunities for all staff to achieve their potential (see below, for example), we also must encourage women and others who are under-represented in the SES ranks to pursue promotions to the senior level.

Myth #2: There are few career development or training opportunities available to Civil Service employees.

Fact: There are many outstanding career development/training opportunities available to Civil Service employees, including:

- The Department participates in a range of government-wide leadership development programs for Civil Service employees, including the Aspiring Leader Program (GS 5-7), New Leader (GS 7-11), Executive Leadership (GS 11-13), and Executive Potential Program (GS 13-15). The programs run from six months to one year and involve classroom discussions, group exercises and rotational work assignments.
- Congressional Fellows Programs give mid-level personnel in Grades GM/GS 13-15 a hands-on understanding of the legislative branch and how congressional decisions about federal agencies' programs are made. Fellows may serve in the offices of Members of Congress or on the staff of a congressional committee.
- The Excellence in Government Fellows Program and the e-Government Fellows Program offer leadership training-site visits to successful corporations and coaching by experienced executives, while candidates continue to serve in their current jobs.
- The Fellows Program with the Army's Command and General Staff College is open to GS-12 or GS-13 employees with bachelor's degrees and country/regional affairs or pol-mil experience.
- The Civil Service Mid-Level Rotational Program, developed in response to a need articulated by State's Civil Service community, supports developmental assignments for GS-12 and GS-13 employees, after which the employee will return to his or her position. Details are at: http://mmsweb.a.state.gov/asp/notices/dn_temp.asp?Notice_ID=10034.



- The Department's Upward Mobility Program for GS-10 (or wage-grade equivalent) employees who have completed the one-year probationary period provides structured, formal training, on-the-job training and developmental assignments, and waives the experience normally required to qualify for positions under the Department's Merit Promotion Program.
- Advanced academic training opportunities include:
 - o The National Defense Intelligence College's free after-hours postgraduate intelligence program;
 - o The National War College, Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the War College of each branch of the armed forces programs for GS-14 and 15 employees;
 - o A one-year residential Masters in Public Policy degree program at Princeton University. Students concentrate on international relations, development studies, domestic policy, economics and public policy. Further information is available at: http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/prd/hrweb/cda/upload/fs_cs-longterm-training.pdf.
 - o A Master in Business Administration program with the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery offered by Webster University on Navy Hill.
- The Foreign Service Institute offers 700 classroom courses as well as more than 180 custom-developed distance learning products and more than 3,000 commercial distance learning courses available through the Internet.
- The Department also runs a very popular Civil Service mentoring program, which currently has 430 participants. Information is at: <http://hrweb.hr.state.gov/prd/hrweb/mentoring>.

I urge all Civil Service employees to take advantage of these development and training programs, and I encourage supervisors to work with employees to provide them the time for these important career advancement opportunities.

Employees interested in these programs should contact Paul Lawrence in HR/CSHRM: LawrencePN@state.gov.

If you have any general comments or suggestions, including topics you would like to see addressed in this column, please feel free to send them to me via unclassified e-mail at DG Direct. ■

Nancy J. Powell

Nancy J. Powell
Director General



Enhancing Diversity

As I regularly peruse the monthly issues of *State Magazine*, I see letters and articles related to diplomacy, recruitment, diversity and equality on a continuous basis.

The United States always has done a superb job in the areas of diversity and human rights. How is the Department of State faring on this front with regard to its myriad bureaus?

Under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations, parts of Articles 1 and 2 state: "All humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as color, race, sex, language, religion."

The State Department has been concerned about the well-being of all its employees and should be commended for that. The key will be to not rest on its laurels but to do more. For that to happen, it must identify the units and people who are doing commendable

work in the areas of human rights and diversity and provide them with adequate resources. One way to find out if these resources are being properly utilized would be to conduct periodic reviews of those units.

The best feedback may be from the clientele themselves, based on their experiences. Units of the Department's bureaus could maintain an ombudsperson to act as a facilitator with ample autonomy to deal with contentious issues. Many posts have Equal Employment Opportunity officers who deal with some of these issues, but the Department may wish to take it up a notch.

To become truly diverse, the State Department should try to increase diversity among its administrative staff and among its leadership at all levels. Special implementation must be placed on retention of minorities. Recruitment is the easy part.

The key would be for the Department to stand up to the challenges facing it and be true to its beliefs.

Kudos to *State Magazine* for continuing to highlight issues related to human rights and diversity.

Krishna Das

*Foreign Service specialist
U.S. Embassy in Bahrain*

Unsafe Welding

I was very impressed with the December 2009 *State Magazine* article "Safe Sites," being a Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations project director proud of the safety record on projects under my direction. Then, to my surprise and dismay, I noticed that in the same issue the man welding the basketball hoop in the "Reaching Youths" article does not have eye, head, arm and hand protection. I trust the ladder was at least safe.

Jeff Watts

*Retired Foreign Service
construction engineer*

Talk to Us

Letters should not exceed 250 words and should include the writer's name, address and daytime phone number. All letters become the property of *State Magazine*. Letters will be edited for length, accuracy and clarity. Only signed letters will be considered.

Via E-mail:
statemagazine@
state.gov

Phone:
(202) 203-7118

Fax:
(202) 203-7142

Mailing Address:
301 4th Street, SW, Room 348,
Washington, DC 20547

News

Students from Escuela San Martín carry a banner to say they've chosen peace over drugs.



Costa Rican Youth Say 'No' to Drugs

More than 500 sixth graders from the rural Costa Rican town of San Carlos publicly committed in October to saying "no" to drugs during the week-long Red Ribbon anti-drug effort supported by the U.S. Embassy in San Jose.

The students from four public schools engaged in such activities as soccer tournaments and competitions to create "Say No to Drugs" chants and slogans. They also saw educational movies with their parents and paraded through the town square displaying their Red Ribbon pins and Drug Abuse Resistance Education T-shirts.

Red Ribbon Week annually involves millions of people worldwide participating in rallies. In Costa Rica, the embassy partnered with San Carlos' municipal government to launch the campaign, which garnered national media coverage.

A public commitment event marked the close of Red Ribbon Week and was attended by parents, teachers, local government officials and church leaders, the nation's minister of public security and an embassy delegation led by Chargé d'Affaires Peter Brennan. Students received trophies from the embassy for their

participation. The youths signed "Say No to Drugs" posters donated by a local radio station, and presented them as a token of gratitude to the officials actively involved in organizing the week's festivities.

"Every one of you here today can make a difference in your schools and communities by spreading the word among your friends and families that illegal use of drugs ruins lives," Brennan told the gathering. "The Red Ribbon puts everyone on notice that we are drug free and shows we care about the future of this nation and our young people."



Reception Honors Unaccompanied Tour Families

In December, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton hosted a “Diplomacy at Home for the Holidays” reception honoring the families of U.S. government employees, including almost 1,000 State Department staff, serving tours in the 17 posts considered unsafe for their families to join them or host visitors. The effort was organized by the Office of the Chief of Protocol and Family Liaison Office, and funded by the magazines *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Mother Earth News*, *Natural Home*, *This Old House* and *Traditional Home*.

The day-long event included a tour for families of Blair House, the President’s guest house, and a reception with Secretary Clinton in the Diplomatic Reception Rooms of the Harry S Truman Building. Both locations had been decorated for the holidays by magazine staff members, local decorators and volunteers.

Family members listened to the Air Force String Quartet, Holton-Arms Upper School Handbell Choir and the Washington Performing Arts Society’s Children of the Gospel Choir. Secretary Clinton told attendees their loved ones are engaged in some of the Department’s most important work.

“They’re engaging communities, strengthening institutions [and] reaching out to civil society,” she said. “They’re keeping our diplomats, our development experts and other Americans safe.”

Children with parents serving unaccompanied tours surround Secretary Clinton at the reception.

AF OPENS WEB SITE ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The Africa Bureau has launched a Web-based Smart Power in Africa “community of interest” devoted to the prevention, mitigation, resolution and reconciliation of conflicts in Africa. Communities of interest are sites on the Intranet that allow groups of people to interact and share information regarding a common interest.

The site was developed by Russell Brooks, the information officer in AF’s Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. Located at http://www.intelink.gov/communities/state/smart_power, the site offers news articles on the crises in Zimbabwe and Sudan, a speech delivered in South Africa by the Norwegian foreign minister, an opinion piece by Angelina Jolie about Sudan and recent reports of the United States Peace Institute and the Council on Foreign Relations on U.S. efforts in conflict prevention.

“This site uses the power of social media to build interagency expertise and consensus on mitigating conflict in Africa,” said Bruce Wharton, director of the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs.

The AF Bureau’s Smart Power in Africa site represents a welcome opening “for

discussion on conflict prevention writ large,” said Cynthia Irmer, a conflict prevention officer in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization.

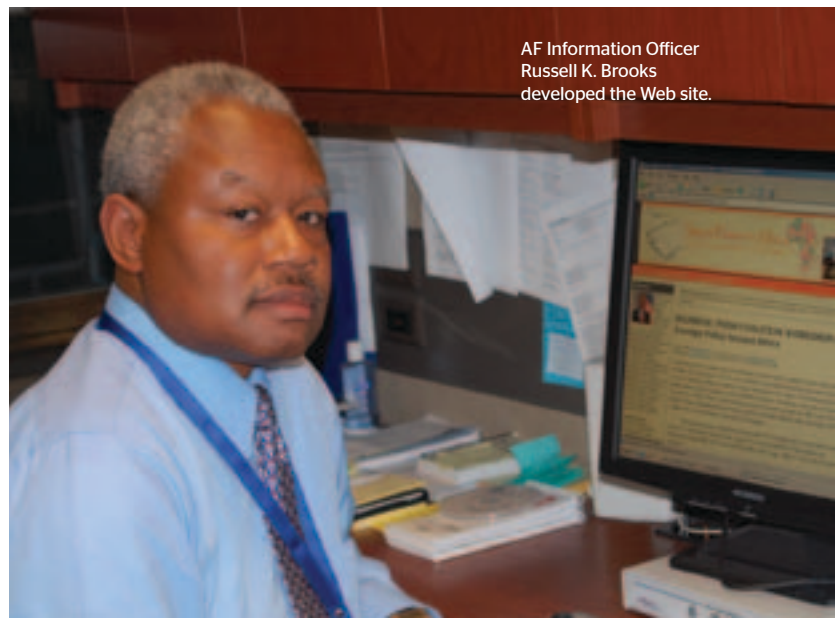
The initiative was set in motion in October, shortly after AF’s Assistant Secretary, Johnnie Carson, identified conflict prevention as a priority and President Barack Obama cited prevention and resolution of conflicts as a primary U.S. policy interest in Africa.

AF said the site will become a source for ideas, experiences and best practices for Africa-watchers in the interagency community who are engaged in conflict prevention and resolution.

“The bureau is proud to be the source of this initiative and that the Office of Public

Diplomacy and Public Affairs is the nexus that brings together our policy goals, communication and technological innovation,” said AF Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Donald Yamamoto.

The site is seeking original articles from Foreign Service officers working in this critical area. Instructions on contributing are on the site’s main page.



AF Information Officer Russell K. Brooks developed the Web site.

Embassy Team Participates in World AIDS Day

The U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby's HIV/AIDS Awareness Team participated in the city's 2009 World AIDS Day event by working at a booth sponsored by Family Health International. They distributed educational material and talked with attendees about HIV prevention and treatment.

Ambassador Teddy Taylor spoke at the event, and embassy staff wore red to mark the day.

The team's six members promote HIV/AIDS awareness and educa-

tion within the embassy and their communities. They distribute condoms and educational pamphlets to mission staff, and organize the showing of educational movies and the presentation of Family Health International's HIV/AIDS training sessions. The team raises its funding through clothing auctions, bake sales and "sausage sizzles."

Ambassador Teddy Taylor and embassy staff wear red to commemorate World AIDS Day.



Department Tweaks Childcare Subsidy Scale

Late last year, the Department changed the income ceiling and subsidy levels for employees receiving subsidized care for their children. Annie Cocchiaro, chair of the Diplotots board, said the Department raised the subsidy ceiling in response to the 2008 tuition increase at the childcare center at the Foreign Service Institute.

The tuition increase moved the FSI center's rates more in line with those at other local federal childcare centers. In December, the Department raised the annual income ceiling to qualify for the subsidy from \$68,000 to \$75,000. It also changed the subsidy scale so that those making up to \$45,000 qualify for the maximum 60 percent reimbursement of their childcare costs. Those making from \$60,000 to \$75,000 qualify for up to 20 percent reimbursement.

The Department also made physical changes at its two childcare centers. It installed new security cameras for the playgrounds at the Diplotots center in State Annex 1, and one playground received a new poured surface. The biggest physical change—renovating the childcare center at the Foreign Service Institute—more than doubled the center's square footage.

The cameras installed on the Diplotots playground are monitored in the office of the center's director, which Cocchiaro said helps ensure that no children are left on the playground when playtime ends and that the teachers perform well while the children are at play.

Director General Nancy Powell introduces a child to Kermit the Frog during her December tour of the Diplotots childcare center.



Secretary Clinton Honors Overseas Volunteers

Several embassy staffers and family members recently received the Secretary of State Award for Outstanding Volunteerism Abroad from the Associates of the American Foreign Service Worldwide.

In a December ceremony in the Ben Franklin Room, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented the annual awards to those she called the face of America overseas.

"Oftentimes, what they do in their volunteer hours speaks volumes about who we are as a people," she said. "It is one thing to give a talk or try to negotiate some treaty that demonstrates our values. It is another thing to embody and live them."

Cathy Salvaterra, chair of the awards program, said two themes were common to all the winners: They advanced the U.S. national interest and acted as community catalysts. "Their actions make everyone else pop up and move," she said.

The winners, one from each regional bureau, were:

- Erin P. Sweeney, consular officer, Lagos, Nigeria. She helped establish the Consulate Community Service Program and obtained two J. Kirby Simon grants totaling \$6,000 to fund completion of the surgical wing of a maternity clinic and renovate a correctional center for girls.

- JanMarie Flattum-Riemers, regional medical officer, Jakarta, Indonesia. She provided medical services at an orphanage and started an embassy recycling program that employed the mentally disadvantaged adults of the orphanage. She also developed a program to help treat neglected children in scavenger communities.

- Lara L. Center, family member, Luxembourg. Using her master's degree in museum studies, she helped the National Military History

Museum expand its outreach by creating a mobile museum service that can travel to classrooms and upgrading the museum's Web page. The museum highlights the U.S. military's role in liberating Luxembourg 65 years ago.

- Joseph A. Taylor, Fulbright exchange program manager, Baghdad, Iraq. He offered adult swim classes that mixed empowerment with sports to a diverse embassy community, including military troops, translators, Foreign Service officers and women from Ethiopia, the Palestinian territories and Iraq—countries where physical activity for females is discouraged.

- Bernadetta J. Ruch, Marine sergeant, Dushanbe, Tajikistan. In this isolated post, she boosted mission morale by organizing a Thanksgiving dinner for more than 100 people, a sumptuous Mexican food night and a holiday event for 140 orphans, all while serving in a chronically understaffed detachment.

- Jan Irene Miller, family member, Panama City, Panama. She demonstrated exceptional leadership and innovation in support of a Panama Chamber of Commerce project to resolve serious metropolitan transportation issues. She organized and analyzed data and produced substantive changes that served Panamanian and American interests.

Also, the Eleanor Dodson Tragen Award was presented to Mette Beecroft for her exceptional work on many issues since the 1970s to improve the quality of life for Foreign Service families, and the Lesley Dorman Award was presented to AAFSW Program Chair Sheila Switzer for her innovative program work and leadership of the Foreign-born Spouse Committee.

DS/IRM TEAM WINS INFORMATION ASSURANCE AWARD

The National Security Agency has conferred its highest award for information assurance within the federal government on the State Department's bureaus of Information Resource Management and Diplomatic Security.

Deputy NSA Director John C. Inglis presented the DS/IRM team with the Frank Byron Rowlett Award for outstanding

excellence in information systems security in November at NSA headquarters. Danny J. Toler, director of IRM's Office of Enterprise Network Management, accepted the award for the Department.

The award recognizes the joint implementation by IRM's Office of Enterprise Network Management and Office of Information Assurance and DS's Office of Computer

Security of the Site Risk Scoring Program, which assesses information systems security at 370 Department locations, including 265 embassies and consulates. The program produces a report card on computer systems security, from the network to the desktop levels, and identifies vulnerabilities in network management, such as application patches needing installation and deficient configurations.

The program also provides system administrators and senior managers with a prioritized road map for addressing security needs. DS said the program in 2008 reduced risks to the Department's information systems on its global network by 90 percent.

The DS/IRM team was selected from among 15 contending organizations. The award is named for the U.S. Army cryptanalyst who helped crack a Japanese system for encoding diplomatic communications. Rowlett's son, Thomas M. Rowlett, attended the ceremony and was a co-presenter of the award.

Attendees at the award's presentation included, back row far left, NSA Deputy Director John Inglis. Holding the trophy is Enterprise Network Management Director Danny Toler. Kneeling from left are IRM Chief Computer Scientist Dr. George Moore, Office of Information Assurance Director John Streufert and Principal Deputy Chief Information Officer for Operations Charles Wisecarver.





Secretary of State Hillary Clinton greets Thomas Carmichael, who was retiring from the Office of Inspector General.

Secretary Says Goodbye To Retiring Employees

Dozens of retiring employees took the opportunity to receive a formal send-off from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the Department's annual retirement ceremony at Main State Dec. 10.

The Secretary said the more than 11,000 years of Department of State experience represented in the Dean Acheson Auditorium encompassed the end of the Vietnam War and the Cold War. The departing employees "set the standard for service" and have "been the hands and the feet of American foreign policy" at a total of 225 posts, she said.

She said it was significant that Dec. 10 was also International Human Rights Day because "that is the essence of who we are and what we stand for as Americans." The retirees "will remain unofficial ambassadors for ourselves and our values," she continued.

STATE

MAGAZINE

Magazine Staff

Rob Wiley
Editor-in-Chief

Ed Warner
Deputy Editor

Bill Palmer
Writer/Editor

David L. Johnston
Art Director

Background

State Magazine (ISSN 1099-4165) is published monthly, except bimonthly in July and August, by the U.S. Department of State, 2201 C St., N.W., Washington, D.C. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing locations.

Change of Address

Send changes of address to *State Magazine*, 301 4th Street, S.W., SA-44, Room 348, Washington, DC 20547. You may also e-mail address changes to statemagazine@state.gov.

Subscriptions

State Magazine is available by paid subscription through the U.S. Government Printing Office by telephone at (202) 512-1800 or on the Web at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.

Submissions

For details on submitting articles to *State Magazine*, request our guidelines, "Getting Your Story Told," by e-mail at statemagazine@state.gov; download them from our Web site at www.state.gov; or send your request in writing to *State Magazine*, 301 4th Street, S.W., SA-44, Room 348, Washington, DC 20547.

Deadlines

The submission deadline for the March 2010 issue is January 15. The deadline for the April issue is February 15.

Environmental Notes

State Magazine is printed in the USA using soy-based inks on recycled paper that contains 10% post-consumer waste and is SFI-certified.



Inclusion Done Right

I recently had a very enlightening experience in Lansing, Mich. The good people of the Bureau of Consular Affairs invited me, as Chief Diversity Officer, to speak at a ceremony for a new site for a Consular Affairs contractor. What was so unique about this experience was that the primary contractor, Peckham Industries, focuses on providing meaningful and holistic employment opportunities to individuals with severe disabilities. Approximately 80 percent of the 200-some contractors working at the Department's call center in Lansing have severe disabilities.

To provide some background, Peckham Industries, an Ability One company, was awarded the National Passport Information Center contract in December 2008 and took on full responsibilities for the call center in March 2009. NPIC's customer service representatives provide passport information, status on pending passport applications and scheduling of appointments at passport agencies.

The building that houses NPIC's Lansing employees is simply amazing. The entire building focuses on inclusiveness, good health, accessibility and sustainability. The architects used "universal design" for accessibility. Every door has automatic openers; all bathroom doors are painted a dark purple color so that individuals with cognitive issues can find them easily; all software and hardware are accessible; there are plenty of disability-friendly parking spaces; the bathroom locks use a back-and-forth motion instead of the more complicated turning motion; the ballet bars in the weight room are adjustable for individuals of various stature; the shower knobs in the weight room are placed at a level for individuals in wheelchairs; and a few of the desks were adjusted to serve as standing desks for individuals with back problems. This inclusive model was designed with purpose, not only for the current employees but for future employees, as well.

Not only does the building seek to provide physical accessibility for individuals with disabilities, other aspects of the individual's life are treated with respect. Television screens display job announcements in every room; almost every cubicle has access to a window; employees are encouraged to sit in the open-air garden in the center of the building; fresh fruit is available every day in the kitchen; career specialists meet periodically with each employee; and in another Peckham Industries building, there's

a free art studio. The entire building is environmentally friendly and meets the LEED certification standard by using cork floors, recycled plastic countertops and recycled steel.

This is a win/win/win program. The Department wins because we have a dedicated, trained workforce. (Since July, the facility's customer service representatives have answered an

average of 98 percent of all calls, well above call center industry standards.) Persons with disabilities win because they have the opportunity to find work that provides a salary and independence, and the taxpayer wins because an individual with a disability has a job and an opportunity to forge a career.

Despite the esteemed political and government speakers at the event, the most inspiring speaker, by far, was an impressive young woman who told the gathering that her job as a contractor for the Department has given her new hope for an independent life and a way to support her family. She eloquently shared that before this job, because of poor transportation options due to her using a wheelchair and a lack of employment opportunities, she was basically sequestered at

home. There was not a dry eye in the room as she explained that her job and the supportive environment provided by Peckham Industries had given her the motivation to begin physical therapy and allowed her to move from a wheelchair to a walker. She said that she loves her job. Even though "some of the callers are not the nicest," she is glad for the opportunity to work each day and plans to work her way to a promotion.

As the Department works to become more inclusive of persons with disabilities, CA's commitment and innovative approach to diversity is to be commended. The bottom line is simple: An intentional focus on diversity and employee well-being coupled with dedicated management staff and employment opportunities translates into true inclusion. ■



John M. Robinson
John M. Robinson
Office of Civil Rights

Joint Effort

Embassy exercise boosts preparedness

By Jonathan Henick

During a recent exercise, U.S. Marines landed on the front lawn of the ambassador's residence at the U.S. Embassy in Dili, Timor-Leste, in full battle gear. They secured the compound and prepared to repel intruders while their comrades set up security checkpoints and processing stations for the dozens of Americans due to arrive for a simulated evacuation.

The arrival of combat helicopters and battle-hardened Marines was part of the embassy's joint effort with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit to simulate a noncombatant evacuation operation exercise in October. Deployed from the *USS Bonhomme Richard*, the Marines were in Timor-Leste to

conduct military exercises and community activities with the Timorese armed forces and the Australian and New Zealand peacekeepers of the International Stabilization Force.

When Regional Security Officer Jan Hiemstra, a former Army helicopter pilot, suggested the exercise involving the American community in Dili, the Marines jumped at the chance. The embassy worked for several days to prepare, updating contact information for American citizens and readying the paperwork and procedures required for an actual military evacuation.

Volunteers Arrive

After the Marines secured the compound and set up security

screening and processing tables, the first of about 40 American volunteer evacuees began to arrive. The Americans were required to go through all of the procedures that would be required in an actual evacuation, including packing a suitcase with their belongings the night before. The Marines and embassy staff explained to the Americans what identification documents were required and why they would have to sign a promissory note and privacy waiver. When the helicopters landed, the Americans were flown to the *USS Bonhomme Richard* for additional processing, lunch and a tour.

The exercise gave the embassy staff and Marines an opportunity to rehearse an activity they hope

never to have to actually conduct and to improve the registration information and tools for contacting Americans. By actually landing the largest helicopters in the Marine Corps' inventory, the post validated the landing site and added measures to maintain its readiness for an actual evacuation. The Marines benefited from planning and rehearsing a realistic evacuation and testing their new tracking system for such evacuations, and the Americans got a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to ride a combat helicopter and land on an aircraft carrier. ■

The author is the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Dili.

Marines process volunteer evacuees as they arrive at the embassy, including (from left) staff member Jodilyn Johnson and her daughter Mackenzie Johnson. **Opposite page:** A Timorese man and child watch Marine helicopters arriving at the embassy.



PHOTOGRAPHS: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE





Cultural Envoy Steve James, right, plays bluegrass at a standing-room-only concert in Sofia. At left is Yassen Vassilev, of Bulgaria's only bluegrass band, Lilly of the West.

Bridging Cultures

Program helps posts promote community unity // *By Sherry C. Keneson-Hall*

After civil unrest in 2007 left a Paris suburb on edge and ethnically divided, the cultural attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Paris, Lora Berg, and her team worked with the Department's Cultural Envoy Program to help reunite the community. Several local municipalities wanted some positive solutions to help frustrated young people, so Berg also contacted the Mural Arts Program, which has completed more than 3,000 murals in the city of Philadelphia.

The Cultural Envoy Program supported the visit of three American artists from the Mural Arts Program to work in three Paris suburbs. The artists spent several weeks in

the communities holding meetings and getting to know the citizens. When the concepts for the murals were completed, each community gathered to paint the designs, which were drawn on parachute cloth and divided up like a giant paint-by-numbers canvas.

On a sunny day, local residents came out of their apartment buildings and painted the murals together, Berg said.

Restoring Pride

Three murals were completed, and U.S. Ambassador to France Charles Rivkin inaugurated one depicting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and located in a traditionally

underserved community. Daily press and French art magazines covered the project, which brought the neighborhoods together and helped restore a sense of pride. Berg said a woman told her how it was once so grey and depressing outside her window, but that the mural had brought color and beauty to her day.

The program's cultural envoys are more than artists, musicians and dancers; they are resources for reaching audiences dealing with tough issues and raising awareness of these issues. Posts request envoys and pay a share of the resulting project's cost.

"There are so many creative and talented



Top: Children help paint pieces of a mural in Bagnolet, France, as part of a community event organized by the Cultural Envoys to help local people feel invested in the murals. **Middle:** In Villiers-le-Bel, France, the façade of the Martin Luther King High School now hosts an image of King, the result of workshops for children from surrounding neighborhoods. **Bottom:** Cultural Envoy Joe Tayoun teaches a drumming class at a school in Esbjerg, Denmark. Tayoun used drumming to talk about how multi-ethnic communities can enrich Danish society.



young people out there who have great ideas for how to reach others,” said Colombia Barrosse, Cultural Programs Division chief at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Two posts in Africa requested “krumpers,” a type of urban dancer, to work with youth on HIV/AIDS programs. “The public diplomacy officers at post certainly understood how the Cultural Envoy Program could be used to reach the younger audience,” she said.

Another post requested a chef who could address issues dealing with food safety, health, imports, exports and American products.

Each year, the Cultural Programs Division sends out a cable on how to apply for envoys; instructions are also available on the Intranet. ECA then reviews applications and decides what to fund. Programs run from 10 days to eight weeks. Last year, about 35 programs were funded.

Minority Outreach

Deborah MacLean, public diplomacy officer at the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen, used the program to reach out to ethnic minorities in Denmark. “We wanted to encourage these youths to realize that it is okay to be different,” she said.

Two Lebanese-American performers conducted workshops in schools and community centers. The 10-day workshops, on drumming and acting, involved students ages 12 to 24. MacLean is working on bringing back the two envoys for additional programs.

American blues guitarist Steve James traveled to Bulgaria in May for workshops on the benefits of embracing a multicultural society.

“America is a melting pot and nowhere is that more evident than in our artistic culture and in our music,” said James. “Every form of pop music and folk music in America is a direct result of our being a multi-ethnic culture.”

James conducted master’s classes with students from the Music Academy in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, and workshops at three other Bulgarian schools, reaching out to students from ages 8 to 18.

“Some of these people were really experienced and talented musicians, but they had never seen anyone play this kind of music,” he said.

Good Response

James said he felt he was able to communicate with Bulgarians and that they responded well to him.

“There really is a Bulgarian identity and they wanted to share their experiences as I was sharing mine,” he said.

For his final show, James joined Lilly Drumeva, Bulgaria’s only bluegrass performer. One Bulgarian man had traveled more than three hours to attend the free concert and arrived still dressed in his worker’s overalls.

“That story is emblematic of the experiences I had all over Bulgaria,” James said. “Very diverse Bulgarian audiences left knowing something more about American culture, and I left knowing more about theirs.” ■

The author is the cultural affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Freed Press

When Iraq's second-largest city, Basrah, was terrorized by Iraqi militias prior to March 2008, women were especially targeted. Religious vigilantes in 2007 and 2008 killed 133 women there for so-called "violations of honor."

But when the Iraqi government—supported by the Coalition—regained control of the city, relative safety was

views about the future of Iraq.

Called "Dr. Juliana" by friends and students, the soft-spoken Yousif said *Al-Jenubya* aims to encourage society and government to change how women are treated. The education and employment of disadvantaged women is particularly important, she said.

"This segment of society is neglected by

the government," said Yousif, who has written about the plight of over two million widows and about forced and repressive marriages.

"Support for publications like this adds an important Iraqi voice to the discussion on women's issues in Iraq. The next goal is to strengthen the sustainability of the publication," observed David Kennedy, the

Regional Director for Public Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Important Topics

Al-Jenubya tackles topics other media tend to avoid, such as how social, tribal and legal circumstances conspire to send women to prison. Other topics it addresses include social and security implications of women involved in the political process and the high levels of breast cancer in Basrah.

The newspaper's latest issue included a story on the plight of young fatherless girls who walk Basrah's streets alone at night to panhandle. *Al-Jenubya* asked the govern-

ment what it intends to do about this.

Although the newspaper focuses on Southern Iraq, it has also written about the practice of circumcising young girls in Kurdistan.

One male reader in the city of Nassyria, Haitham Al-Jasem, called the newspaper "a significant voice of concern for the human rights of women."

"Years of persecution and segregation paralyzed the role of women," he said. "*Al-Jenubya* gives them hope."

Yousif produces the newspaper with a small staff that includes a part-time writer who was one of her former students. Lawyers, teachers and community activists regularly contribute to the newspaper, which is distributed throughout Southern Iraq to nongovernmental organizations, Internet cafes, literary associations, state-owned industries and government offices.

Seeking Support

Recently, *Al-Jenubya* embarked on a campaign to raise funds to sustain and increase its 4,000-copy circulation. Since Iraqis are unfamiliar with advertising, Yousif is seeking the international community's support by approaching foundations and organizations dedicated to empowering women.

Speaking on the future of Iraqi women and *Al-Jenubya*, Yousif said she has always believed the best is yet to come and feels confident Iraqi women can change their situation.

"*Al-Jenubya* will remain a faithful companion of women in their tireless efforts to move ahead," she said. "*Al-Jenubya*'s contribution may be the drop that triggers the sea of change." ■

The author is public diplomacy officer at the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basrah.



Alghadeer Printing Company's M. Al Aamiri confers with Dr. Juliana Daywood Yousif, center, and Sara Salman, one of the newspaper's journalists. **Right:** Dr. Yousif examines an edition fresh off the presses.

restored to women, and a few gained a newspaper named *Al-Jenubya*, "Southern Woman." The Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basrah funds the bimonthly newspaper, but plays no role in its content.

The newspaper is published by a leading advocate for women in Southern Iraq, Dr. Juliana Daywood Yousif. A professor of English and Translation at Basrah University and founder of the Basrah Society for Research and Media, Yousif is one of the few highly educated women who did not flee the city, despite the former repression. When Vice President Joe Biden visited Basrah in 2008, he met with her to hear her



PRT supports women's newspaper in Iraq • By Michael Sunshine





A bedroom at one of the program's residences in Arlington, Va., offers a great view.



Money-Saver

PCS Lodging Program aids with D.C.-area stays */// By Raphael Mirabal*

The Permanent Change of Station Lodging Program, now in its fourth year, has accommodated close to 4,000 employees and their families—30 percent of the Foreign Service. The program saves the average employee more than \$5,000, based on the usual five-and-a-half-month stay.

However, many Foreign Service officers aren't aware of the program's benefits.

The PCS Lodging Program was developed with the FSO in mind. Officers traveling to Washington, D.C., for Foreign Service Institute training that is expected to last 60 days or more risk having out-of-pocket costs creep upward when per diem rates start to slide. FSOs training at FSI for 60 days or less receive 100 percent of the per diem. After 60 days, the per diem is paid out at 50 percent;

at 121 days, the per diem drops to 25 percent reimbursement for the remainder of the employee's temporary stay.

The good news is that FSOs who contract with the PCS Lodging Program end up saving money. The bad news is that the program cannot be entered into after using up part of the lodging allowance elsewhere. The reality is that many employees turn to Craigslist, Rent.com and other housing search vehicles to try to find accommodations. However, when they don't use the program, employees may have to respond on their own to training extensions, raised rent, landlord headaches, penalties and lack of flexibility.

When they use the PCS Lodging Program, employees can stay as long as necessary without any worry about lodging costs. This

is possible because the lodging costs are paid directly by the program. The Department partners with Oakwood Worldwide corporate rentals, which offers extended-stay corporate lodging facilities.

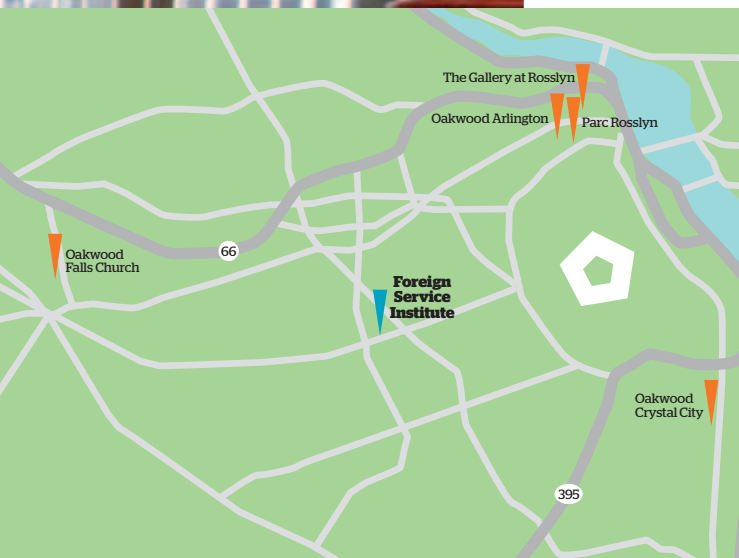
Range of Facilities

The program's apartments, ranging from efficiencies to three-bedroom units, are furnished with all the appliances and supplies needed for a temporary stay. They include the use of washers and dryers, basic cable TV, high-speed Internet connection, local telephone calling and free transportation to and from FSI. The program also allows for free parking in select locations and pets.

Oakwood offers rental units in Rosslyn, Crystal City and Falls Church, Va. The Falls



Top left: Modern furnishings adorn the living room of one of the Oakwood properties. **Bottom left:** Residences are located in convenient proximity to the FSI campus. **Below:** The exterior of the Oakwood apartments building in Crystal City, Va., shows its modern design.



Church property is located in one of the best school districts in northern Virginia and continues to be the site most requested by participants who have school-age children.

Under guidelines established by Bureau of Human Resources and FSI leadership, the program is voluntary for most employees. Those attending training in the DC area funded by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security and personnel on MEDEVAC orders must use the program unless they obtain an exception.

Benefits to employees include no out-of-pocket lodging costs no matter how long their training lasts, no need to tie up credit cards, no lengthy reimbursement wait times and the ease of setting up housing—it just involves an exchange of e-mails. There are also quarterly social events for program participants.

Fewer Problems

More and more employees are seeing the logic of using this program. Employees who use the program and find their training extended do not have to pay out-of-pocket nor need they worry about their landlord selling the property, increasing the rent or penalizing

them through an unclear lease agreement.

Some employees who didn't use the program have been assured by landlords that extending or curtailing their stays would not be a problem. However, they find a different situation if the landlord did not make this clear in the lease. As a result, hefty deposits can be lost and employees can be left to find new accommodations at a point where they face a decreasing per diem. The program helps employees avoid these risks.

Although initially started for employees who are funded under the Permanent Change of Station account, the program is now available to other bureaus and offices. To date, it has been used by staff from the bureaus of Diplomatic Security, Near Eastern and Asian Affairs and Overseas Buildings Operations, and by the Office of Medical Services.

Reflecting the program's success, the average ratings that participants give it on evaluations are in the mid 90s on a scale of

zero to 100. Program participants say it is "the most family-friendly program the Department has ever produced" and that it was an outstanding experience.

"This program was a godsend," said one participant. "I was able to take nine months of language without impoverishing my family."

Overwhelmingly, participants say they would use the program again and recommend it to friends and colleagues.

To enroll in the program or gain more information, contact the program at HRPCSLodging@state.gov. Views of the properties and more information are available on Facebook, Diplopedia or at <http://state.oakwood.com>. ■

The author is a management officer in HR's Executive Office.



Department Awards

Award Winners Achieve Excellence Worldwide /// *By Bill Palmer*

“This morning we celebrate creativity and innovation,” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told an overflow crowd during the Department Awards Ceremony in November. Speaking in the Benjamin Franklin Room, she said the 2009 award winners “have come up with innovative ideas, demonstrated remarkable bravery and led successful policy initiatives.”

The annual awards recognize outstanding achievements in functional areas such as reporting and analysis, management, linguistic ability, administration, security, consular services, international economics, trade development, peacekeeping, equal employment opportunity and mentoring.

While lauding the winners, Secretary Clinton challenged everyone present to “keep asking yourselves what we can do better.”

The awards were presented by Under Secretary for Political Affairs William Burns.



Award for Excellence in Labor Diplomacy

Lucy M. Chang

Chang, labor officer at the U.S. Embassy in Guatemala City, was cited for her courage, sustained excellence and outstanding contributions in advancing respect for worker rights and U.S. labor policy objectives in Guatemala.



James A. Baker III - C. Howard Wilkins Jr. Award for Outstanding Deputy Chief of Mission

Leslie Ann Bassett

Bassett, former Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, was cited for her managing urgent and important matters, and being a superb leader of the embassy's interagency law enforcement team and a dedicated mentor to upcoming officers.



Warren Christopher Award for Outstanding Achievement in Global Affairs

Liana Brooks-Rubin

Brooks-Rubin, deputy director of the Office of Assistance for Asia and the Near East in the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, was cited for her sustained leadership and initiative on global issues, particularly in the areas of human rights, emergency humanitarian response and refugee protection.



Civil Service Secretary of the Year

Nancy Long Dolce

Dolce, of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, was cited for her outstanding skills—particularly in training, records management and customer service—that have improved the operations of her office in coordinating some of the most sensitive intelligence activities of the U.S. government.



Charles E. Cobb Jr. Award for Initiative and Success in Trade Development

Michael W. Michalak

Michalak, U.S. ambassador to Vietnam, was cited for successfully promoting reform of Vietnam's trade and investment regime, resulting in significant export successes for U.S. companies as well as improvements in Vietnam's economic governance that will benefit U.S. exporters and investors for years to come.



Sue M. Cobb Award for Exemplary Diplomatic Service

Thomas T. Riley

Riley, former U.S. ambassador to Morocco, was cited for his extraordinary strategic vision, dynamism, leadership and management of Mission Morocco from 2004 until 2009. His promotion of U.S. business, the Free Trade Agreement and the Millennium Challenge Account Compact will be lasting legacies.



**Ryan C. Crocker
Award for Outstanding
Leadership
in Expeditionary
Diplomacy**

Elizabeth Rood

Rood, formerly of Provincial Reconstruction Team Paktika, Afghanistan, was cited for her exceptional service to the United States and the people of Afghanistan by helping to extend governance and development to Paktika Province's most remote and dangerous districts, building the capacity of Paktika's provincial government and reaching a nationwide audience with positive messages, delivered in Pashto, about the United States.



**Diplomatic Security
Employee of the Year**

Fredrick J. Ketchem

Ketchem, former deputy regional security officer at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, was cited for his dedication, steadfast professionalism and exemplary service in pursuit of U.S. strategic goals in Iraq. His visionary leadership and efforts ensured a safe and secure environment for the conduct of diplomacy.



**Director General's
Award for Impact
and Originality in
Reporting**

Jonathan G. Pratt

Pratt, former political and economic section chief at the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum, was cited for his timely, well-researched and outstanding analysis and advice that influenced the U.S. approach toward one of the U.S. government's highest foreign policy priorities.



**James Clement Dunn
Award for Excellence**

Peter David Haas

Haas, economic counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, was cited for his intellectual energy, policy acumen and outstanding leadership. He advanced U.S. foreign policy priorities, particularly in the areas of trade finance, health and education; was an excellent manager of the economic section; and mentored colleagues throughout the mission.



**Equal Employment
Opportunity Award**

Robert S. Gilchrist

Gilchrist, a student at the Foreign Service Institute, was cited for his outstanding leadership in laying the groundwork for improved personnel policies for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, and for his commitment to an innovative equal opportunity policy that is inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression at the Department and all foreign affairs agencies.



**Cordell Hull Award
for Economic
Achievement by
Senior Officers**

Craig Allen Kelly

Kelly, principal deputy assistant secretary in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, was cited for outstanding leadership, diplomacy and determination in successfully conceiving and negotiating the “Pathways to Prosperity in the Americas”—a major policy initiative that affects the entire region. He created this major trade and development initiative during a time of change in Administration, successfully obtaining the buy-in of interagency and foreign and domestic partners.



**Leamon R. Hunt
Award for
Management
Excellence**

Kristi Dianne
Hogan-Lahmar

Hogan-Lahmar, formerly of the U.S. Embassy in Algiers, was cited for superb leadership of embassy management operations, which included making personnel changes, implementing broad-based training programs for new personnel and creating and institutionalizing standard operating procedures. Her rebuilding and normalizing of operations occurred during a period of significant threat and major transition.



**Innovation in the Use
of Technology Award**

Timothy B. Receveur

Receveur, a foreign policy officer in the Bureau of International Information Programs, was cited for his extraordinary innovation and creativity in developing two major low-cost media platforms for public diplomacy: the CO.NX, a Web conferencing 2.0 platform for engaging audiences, and X Life, a mobile phone game that uses avatars and English teaching to educate Arab youth about American society. His efforts support the Administration’s commitment to interactivity and international engagement, and have given U.S. officials the ability to reach new audiences electronically.



**Linguist of the Year
Award**

Stephen Alan Cristina

Cristina, former deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Tirana, was cited for exemplary use of extraordinary language skills in support of U.S. foreign policy objectives, including democratization and reduction of dangerous weapons stockpiles in Albania. He was also recognized for his determination to acquire, maintain and improve his Dari language proficiency in preparation for his assignment to Kabul.



Swanee Hunt Award for Advancing Women's Role in Policy Formulation

Heidi N. Gomez and
George Francis Phelan

Gomez, human rights and labor officer at the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires, was cited for commitment to empowering women advocates at the grassroots level, especially to combat trafficking in persons, the use of illegal drugs, discrimination against Afro-Argentine women and domestic violence against women.



Phelan, rule of law advisor for the ePRT in Northeast Baghdad, was cited for his active role in advancing women's issues in Baghdad by developing a women's nongovernmental organization, establishing five women's centers, organizing continuing legal education seminars, implementing a ministerial and parliamentary internship program for young women and developing a Domestic Violence Census project.



Frank E. Loy Award for Environmental Diplomacy

Andrew R. Herrup

Herrup, environment, science, technology and health officer at the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, was cited for outstanding leadership in advancing U.S.-Vietnam cooperation on climate change, peaceful uses for nuclear power and remediation of dioxin (Agent Orange) contamination in Vietnam.



Award for Excellence in International Security Affairs

Donna A. Phelan
(Civil Service) and
Jane Ellen Bocklage
(Foreign Service)

Phelan, a deputy office director in the Bureau of Verification, Compliance and Implementation, was cited for pivotal contributions to the development, implementation and management of U.S.-European responses to Russia's suspension of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

Bocklage, a political officer at the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, was cited for significant contributions to the success of U.S. efforts to deepen relations with Vietnam.



Edward R. Murrow Award for Excellence in Public Diplomacy

Benjamin Ziff

Ziff, former public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, was cited for energy, creativity and ingenuity in using the best practices of public diplomacy to materially advance U.S. interests in Venezuela during a challenging period in the bilateral relationship.



**Thomas Morrison
Information
Management Award**

Wendell D. Bullington

Bullington, former information programs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, was cited for exceptional performance, innovation and leadership under trying and dangerous conditions while serving as the Baghdad New Embassy Compound information technology coordinator. He demonstrated remarkable dedication and perseverance in preparing the Baghdad NEC, the world's largest and most complex embassy compound, for occupancy.



**Arnold L. Raphel
Memorial Award**

Daniel Bennett Smith

Smith, assigned to the Executive Secretariat, was cited for success in counseling, encouraging and motivating peers and subordinates, and for inspiring the current and next generation of Department employees to achieve excellence in the pursuit of U.S. foreign policy.



**Office Management
Specialist of the Year**

Patricia Reber

Reber, formerly assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa, was cited for resourcefulness, commitment to customer service, exceptional interpersonal skills, mentoring of junior officers and exemplary handling of a high VIP visitor workload in Ethiopia.



**Luther I. Replogle
Award for
Management
Improvement**

Ralph A. Hamilton

Hamilton, financial management officer at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, was cited for outstanding leadership, wide-ranging management improvements and resourcefulness, resulting in substantial cost savings, critical training and improved morale throughout Mission India.



Mary A. Ryan Award for Outstanding Public Service

Edward McKeon

McKeon, minister-counselor for Consular Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, was cited for extraordinary service to more than 1.3 million American citizens residing in Mexico and 7 million American visitors. He leads a team that manages 10 percent of the untenured entry-level officers in the Department and has encouraged the post to cross-train employees to streamline workflow and shift resources internally.



Herbert Salzman Award for Excellence in International Economic Performance

Jason "Andy" Abell

Abell, economic officer at the U.S. Embassy in Damascus, was cited for exceptional contributions to understanding the economic realities in Syria and his influential reporting on how to optimize the application of trade and financial sanctions to empower free-market advocates while discouraging destabilizing behavior by the government of Syria.



Rockwell Anthony Schnabel Award for Advancing U.S.-EU Relations

Marisa L. Plowden

Plowden, formerly with the U.S. Mission to the European Union, was cited for playing a pivotal role in sharpening U.S. government and U.S.-EU thinking about Afghanistan from the EU perspective, and coordinating with the EU to enhance its role in Afghanistan.



Barbara M. Watson Award for Consular Excellence

Donald Leroy Moore

Moore, consul general at the U.S. Embassy in Port au Prince, was cited for exceptional, creative and committed efforts to further U.S. interests in Haiti. His steadfast service to the American community, efforts to provide the best visa service to Haitian visa clients and careful and engaged mentoring of his staff meet the highest standards of consular excellence. ■

The author is a writer/editor with State Magazine.

* FSN of the Year





Exemplary Service

FSNs honored for extra-mile efforts in 2009 /// *By Bill Palmer*

As in previous years, the winners of the Department's 2009 Foreign Service National Employee of the Year award serve mostly in posts where internal and external stresses caused by war, terrorism and tense bilateral relations gave outstanding local employees the opportunity to show their mettle.

The winners represent many others like themselves. As Under Secretary for Political Affairs William Burns said at the Department Awards Ceremony in November, "Our Locally Employed Staff are the backbone of every U.S. embassy and consulate. None of our missions could function without the steadfast dedication, hard work and loyalty of our enormously talented FSN colleagues."

Coordinated by the Bureau of Human Resources' Office of Overseas Employment, the awards honor six regional FSNs of the Year. This year's winners were selected from among dozens of outstanding nominees. One of the six, Nigel Whitehouse, was named Department-wide FSN of the Year.

Whitehouse



AF and FSN of the Year

Whitehouse, the management operations coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in N'Djamena, is the 2009 Foreign Service National of the Year. Nominated by the Bureau of African Affairs, he was cited for "30 years of extraordinary contributions to the advancement of U.S. interests in Chad."

His history with the country and the embassy actually goes back to 1977, when he, his wife and their two children pulled up stakes in remote Dawson Creek, Canada, and set off for Chad as "pioneers" of the Baha'i faith. "I had to find it on a map," he said. The couple had to support themselves, so they began working at the U.S. Embassy. Two years later, he experienced his first war and first evacuation. He would play a key role in at least seven more evacuations, but 1979 was the worst, he said, because it was

his first experience with diving for cover as bullets whizzed past.

After putting embassy families on planes and evacuating to Cameroon, he was asked to return to Chad in 1981 and reopen the embassy—in three weeks. With \$5,000 in local currency, he paid off the combatants who had been living in filth in the ambassador's residence, cleaned, painted and set it up as a chancery. Then, he and his old general services office colleagues converted the former deputy chief of mission residence into the ambassador's residence. At the first diplomatic function there, Coke crates served as chairs and electrical cable spools as tables.

During subsequent evacuations, Whitehouse "always remained behind to safeguard local embassy employees, embassy assets and U.S. interests," the embassy nominating cable said. "His resourceful, untiring and heroic efforts in 2008 are only a small sample of his invaluable

contributions to keeping the U.S. Mission running over decades," the embassy said.

In 2008, during a failed coup, Whitehouse drove through mortar and tank fire to bring stranded expatriate families to evacuation points. He "singlehandedly ensured that embassy facilities were safe, that embassy employees were paid and fed, and that important messages were transmitted, despite the shutdown of the phone system," the embassy said.

Finally, Whitehouse guided the process of building a new embassy compound through Chad's bureaucratic maze—an achievement the embassy described as a "tour de force."

A few other things the nominating cable didn't mention: Whitehouse and his wife over the years have adopted 15 children, founded schools that have educated thousands of students and tended a farm outside N'Djamena.

After the first war, the family

considered returning to Canada, Whitehouse said, but "it seemed like we could be so much more useful where we were."

EAP

Hyun Sook Choi, supervisory visa specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, is the FSN of the Year for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. She was cited for her "impressive contributions and determined actions in creating a nonimmigrant visa operation with improved customer service, enhanced staff knowledge and improved working conditions in the wake of the Visa Waiver Program."

Choi came to the embassy nearly 19 years ago already having an international background. The daughter of a United Nations official, she had worked for the 1988 Seoul Olympic Committee and for foreign broadcast agencies. But she had faced few challenges as difficult as her role in managing the downsizing of



the visa section and dealing with related morale issues.

Seoul went from processing the largest number of nonimmigrant visa cases in the world—close to 500,000—to a workload of 150,000 cases. Of course, Korea's accession to the waiver program in late 2008 was a boon for bilateral relations. But in the visa section there was fear, Choi said, as the elimination of FSN positions loomed. "We realized there was no turning back."

She brainstormed with other senior FSNs on how to ease the blow. "We suggested using natural attrition" and asked for embassy support in finding jobs for downsized employees in other embassy sections as well as through the American Chamber of Commerce and Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she said. Eventually, many of the FSNs got hired by the embassy or the U.S. military, she added.

The embassy nominating cable said "consular management used Ms. Choi's unerring advice, guidance and cultural insights to shore up morale. She was an invaluable

conduit between management and staff." That was hard, she said. "Speaking to FSNs, I had to speak for management, and to management I had to give the concerns and feelings of FSNs. Trying to balance that wasn't easy." She didn't know what would happen to her own job, either, but "I had to put that aside."

Choi played a significant role in reorganizing the embassy's NIV unit, the embassy said, astutely accounting for the strengths of supervisors and FSNs as she helped guide the consolidation of five processing teams into three.

Choi is married and has a daughter.

SCA

Anil Raj Paulose, a security investigator at the U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai, is the FSN of the Year for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. He was cited for "exceptional performance to the U.S. Mission in India in furthering the goals of diplomacy, enhancing security and strengthening relationships."

The most dramatic example

was his performance during the terrorist attacks on Nov. 26, 2008. As the only security investigator at post (the other one had recently died), he started receiving calls at 10:30 at night when the attacks began. He said at first he thought it was just a flare-up of gang warfare. Little did he know that he would barely sleep for the next four days.

He spent the night on the phone, passing information from the police to the assistant regional security officer. Then he went out. "Risking his own safety," the mission's nominating cable said, "Anil arrived on the attack scene while the security forces were attempting to retake the hotel so he could provide firsthand information to the Emergency Action Committee."

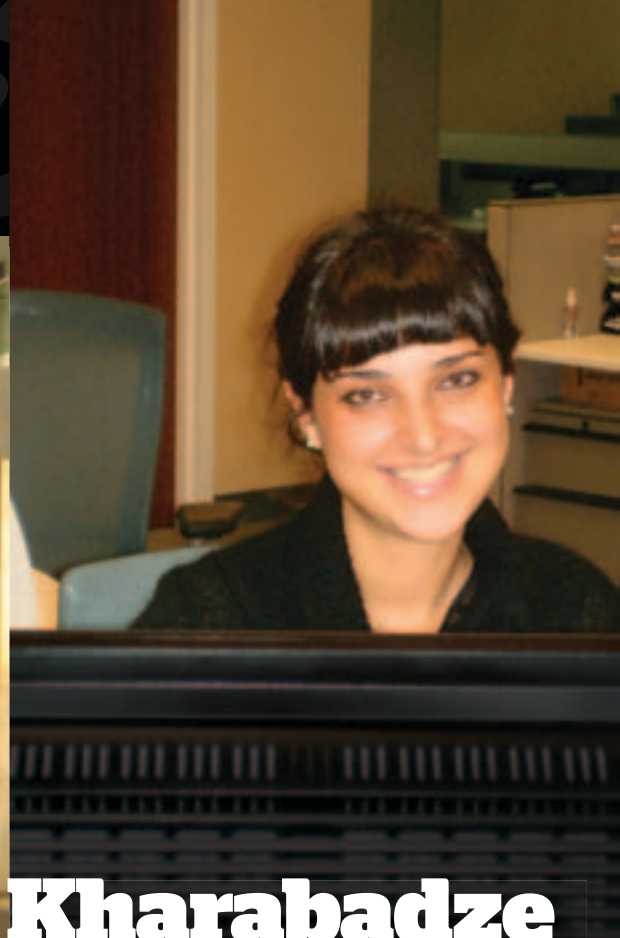
"As events unfolded the next few days, Anil repeatedly escorted consulate personnel, an FBI investigative team and members of the Diplomatic Security Service response team into dangerous situations at the Jewish Center and the Taj Mahal and Trident/Oberoi hotels to rescue Americans and look for missing Americans."

Paulose had carefully cultivated relationships with the police and hotel security managers over the years, so he was able to get beyond barricades and get room numbers of American guests. It was hard for him when he saw gruesome photos of death scenes and discovered some of his close contacts had suffered grievous losses, such as the general manager of the Taj Mahal Hotel, whose wife and two sons were killed.

The Mumbai attacks were not the first example of Paulose's initiative. In 2006, he and two consulate colleagues were almost killed when the train car they had been riding in was bombed by a Muslim terrorist group just after they had left it. "With the explosion still ringing in his ears, Anil rushed to the mangled train to assist victims while simultaneously making calls to the consulate to warn other consulate employees," the nominating cable said.

Paulose has worked at the consulate nearly 10 years. He is married and has a son.

Mansour



Kharabadze

NEA

Rashad Mansour, a security investigator at the U.S. Embassy in Damascus, is the FSN of the Year for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs. He was cited for “protecting the embassy and Americans throughout Syria in times of crisis.”

U.S. relations with Syria have long been tense; daily protest marches to the embassy—sometimes two or three in a day—were the norm during the height of the Iraq war, Mansour said. The challenged relationship became even worse in October 2008 amid reports of an alleged U.S. military incursion into Syria. According to the embassy nominating cable, “Rashad sprang into action to protect the Mission amid a torrent of anti-American rhetoric, the forced closure of our Cultural Center and American School, and

demonstrations against the embassy.” He got the cooperation of his Syrian security services contacts in diverting the protesters from U.S. sites, even though many of them were personally outraged over the alleged incursion, the embassy said.

Mansour feels his success depends on personal relationships. “The police understand my position,” he said.

He noted that former President Jimmy Carter, the Secretary of State and congressional delegations have visited Damascus frequently, and, he said, “I am the first one at the airport.” For President Carter’s Secret Service detail, he coordinated unprecedented access to the presidential palace and even arranged access to Hamas facilities, the embassy said, despite a decades-long embargo on contact with that organization.

While he has helped many VIPs, Mansour has also helped American-citizen children kidnapped by Syrian parents and trapped in the country. He didn’t want to discuss his detective work in detail, but the embassy noted that had assisted the consular section on many such cases, “canvassing neighbors to glean information on at-risk children’s whereabouts.”

Mansour, the senior FSN at the embassy, started working there in 1975 as a guard and, except for his years of military service, has been there ever since. He has been FSN of the Year three times—once for the embassy and twice for NEA. He is married and has a daughter and son.

EUR

Mariam “Marika” Kharabadze, American Citizen Services

assistant, is the FSN of the Year for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. She was cited for “outstanding service to American citizens and colleagues at the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi, Georgia, during the August 2008 war between Georgia and Russia.”

A former visa clerk, Kharabadze had been hired by American Citizen Services but had not officially started when the war began and frightened U.S. citizens began streaming to the embassy. “We started 24-hour ACS operations—without a trained ACS assistant,” the embassy nominating cable said. “This was, however, apparent to no one due to Marika’s constant professionalism, compassion and courage.” She said she could hear the bombs falling as panicked Americans arrived. She was determined not to show her own panic even though she knew her own family might be in danger.

Anda



"I was reading the Foreign Affairs Manual—studying and doing at the same time," Kharabadze said. She quickly became an expert in processing passports.

Kharabadze, who is single, volunteered for long night shifts at the embassy, which is near where the Georgian army was setting up the city's last defenses. "I didn't have time to feel exhausted," she said.

There were about 50 cases of unaccompanied minor children who were staying with relatives—mostly grandparents—in villages behind Russian lines. Cell phone networks were cut off and highways blocked. "Marika helped locate these children and spoke to their caretakers and parents every day for the duration of the war and beyond to make sure everyone was safe," the embassy said. "Marika then helped these parents reunite with their children, whether in Georgia or by facilitating the child's travel."

She got a lot of thank-you notes and phone calls. "It was worth it," she said, "being able to help people who were dependent on us."

WHA

Lisette Anda, a human resources assistant at the U.S. Embassy in La Paz, is the FSN of the Year for the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. She was cited for "decreasing serious adverse effects of local government actions that influence morale and personnel actions in times of political turmoil and civil unrest in Bolivia."

The government of Bolivia's attacks against U.S. interests resulted in an authorized departure and the forced permanent departure of all 166 Peace Corps and Drug Enforcement Agency employees and family members in a few short months. According to the embassy nominating cable,

"Lisette tenaciously processed and tracked both agencies to meet the 90-day departure and termination deadlines."

Reductions in staff followed. She produced detailed benefits briefings and half a dozen workshops on résumé writing and interview skills throughout the country for Locally Employed Staff. "I was doing my work," she said. "I didn't think it was an extraordinary thing. I was just helping my people." To make the terminations less painful, she gave out certificates of service and appreciation. The hardest part for her was reviewing files and helping decide whose jobs would be eliminated. "Most of them were friends," she said.

She found employment opportunities in Iraq for several LE Staff. "Some enjoyed it, but missed their families," she said. "I heard they were good

employees there; that makes me really proud."

She showed her mettle again when the Bolivian government put the embassy's narcotics affairs section in a position where it could not complete its agreement to provide food-service handlers for Bolivian military personnel working in counterdrug logistical support. She helped come up with a quick reprieve. She posted job announcements, reviewed applications, obtained interim security clearances and processed 44 people in days. "Her actions contributed to rapid and continued employment of food services, thus avoiding another political accusation that could have escalated," the embassy said.

Lisette is married and has two children. ■

The author is a writer/editor at State Magazine.

Villagers from Verapaz, El Salvador, unload supplies from a helicopter from Joint Task Force-Bravo.



A Welcome Relief

Joint Effort Aids Flood-Ravaged El Salvador

*By Colonel Christopher P. Gehler and
1st Lieutenant Jen Richard*

In November, when two days of torrential rain in El Salvador caused severe flooding and mudslides that killed more than 140 people and damaged or destroyed more than 1,500 homes in El Salvador, the departments of State and Defense partnered with the U.S. Agency for International Development to provide assistance.

The effort was launched at the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador, where Chargé d'Affaires Robert Blau assembled the Country Team, including the disaster relief officer for USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, the Military Group commander, Defense attaché and public affairs officer. He then began working with United States Southern Command headquarters and SOUTHCOM's Joint Task Force-Bravo, which provides humanitarian assistance and disaster relief throughout Central America.

Because the president of El Salvador had formally requested U.S. assistance, Acting Chief of Mission Blau declared the situation a disaster, immediately accessing USAID/OFDA emergency funding. He also called on DOD for help. With SOUTHCOM approval, JTF-Bravo deployed 45 personnel and four helicopters to help assess the damage, distribute supplies and provide medical aid. Working from a Salvadoran Air Force base in the center of the disaster area, the task force used its connections with the Country Team and Salvadoran military to begin delivering supplies to hardest-hit areas.

Joint Task Force-Bravo said the embassy's

on-the-ground knowledge and contacts, particularly those of USAID/OFDA staff members, were crucial for breaking bureaucratic barriers to get supplies moving.

Blau particularly credited USAID's Bill Elderbaum, the mission disaster relief officer, saying Elderbaum's performance "bordered on heroic."

During November, Joint Task Force-Bravo

communities, serving 2,987 patients.

"Between Nov. 11 and 23, thousands of people in El Salvador received essential relief supplies and medical assistance from the United States, thanks to the collaborative efforts of embassy personnel and JTF-Bravo service members," Blau said. "Such an effective and timely response to El Salvador's flooding disaster was only possible because



Chargé d'Affaires Robert Blau, left, in dark baseball cap, observes medical relief operations in San Vicente, El Salvador.

transported more than 370,000 pounds of supplies, including food, water, milk, sanitation kits and clothing. It also assessed the damage, providing reports and recommendations to the Salvadoran government for its reconstruction efforts, and worked with the nation's military and Ministry of Health to provide medical care to several isolated

of the routine and close collaboration between the departments of State, Defense and USAID." ■

Colonel Christopher P. Gehler is the commander of Joint Task Force-Bravo and 1st Lieutenant Jen Richard is with the joint task force's public affairs office.

Tour operators hope to put more people on this beach by luring back some of the 30,000 tourists a year who visited Sierra Leone before the war.



Freetown

Resilient Sierra Leone Grows into a Beacon of Hope /// *By Danna Van Brandt*



Clockwise from above: Traditional dancers in Mamaka village welcome embassy staffers who brought books and toys for a school built through the support of returned Peace Corps volunteers. Ambassador June Carter Perry presents a backpack to a star pupil—one of 4,000 girls in rural Sierra Leone whose education has been funded as part of the Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Program. The embassy partnered with local cinemas to bring President Obama's key speeches to more than 1,000 Sierra Leoneans who otherwise would have had no access to them.

For many Americans, the name “Sierra Leone” conjures images of drug-crazed child soldiers, “blood diamonds” and amputees. Those images, depicting the brutal civil war that engulfed this coastal nation for more than a decade, were spread by movies and books chronicling the tragedy.

But from the new U.S. Embassy perched on a peak just south of the capital city of Freetown, those pictures seem a distant glimmer as the sun reflects off the ocean and clouds cast shadows on the lush green landscape. Though the country and people still bear many scars from the war that ended nearly a decade ago, their resilience belies their troubled past.

Sierra Leone and the United States have built a strong bilateral relationship. Recent cooperation in the areas of democratic

integrity, security sector reform, mutual legal assistance, governance and development is a testament to the progress being made. In June 2010, Peace Corps volunteers, a staple of village life for more than 30 years, will return to Sierra Leone for the first time since 1993. Ambassador June Carter Perry, whose 40-year involvement with Peace Corps has made her an invaluable advocate, and former Ambassador Thomas Hull, who served as a volunteer in Sierra Leone before joining the Foreign Service, worked diligently to see the program revitalized.

Sierra Leone is rich in natural resources, but endemic corruption, poor infrastructure and ineffective governance have robbed the people of the benefits they should enjoy. U.S. priorities in Sierra Leone, therefore, include

improving governance, encouraging economic growth, reforming the security sector and supporting the development of critical infrastructure.

Working Together

In some areas, the government of Sierra Leone has demonstrated the will and ability to work in tandem with the United States. Following the July 2008 unauthorized landing of a plane loaded with more than 700 kilograms of cocaine at Lungi International Airport and a lengthy local court case, the U.S. Embassy negotiated the expulsion of three individuals wanted in the United States. In August 2009, the embassy and government of Sierra Leone signed the first permanent bilateral maritime assistance agreement in

Sierra Leone is rich in natural resources, but poor infrastructure, endemic corruption and ineffective governance have robbed the people of the benefits they should enjoy.



The *Amistad Freedom Schooner*, named for the infamous slave ship, sailed from New Haven, Conn., to Freetown in 2007 to mark the bicentennial of the abolition of the international slave trade.

West Africa, and the subsequent visit of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Legare* resulted in the largest seizure of illicitly caught fish in the history of Sierra Leone.

In the country's first peaceful transition between civilian political parties, U.S. Agency for International Development programs throughout the 2007 and 2008 national and local elections helped to ensure that women had a stronger voice in the democratic process. Since the elections, a shift in focus to governance and environmental impacts of development projects promises to bring the country closer to its development goals.

Freetown was the first African settlement founded by freed slaves from the United States. They were "black loyalists" who supported the British during the Revolutionary

War in exchange for the promise of freedom. Though the British officially abolished slavery in 1807, the slave trade continued to dominate maritime commerce. In 1839, in waters off the coast of Cuba, a group of 49 captive Sierra Leoneans rebelled on board the ship *Amistad* and set a course for freedom. The saga of their capture, transport, revolt and trial has marked Sierra Leonean and U.S. history.

The *Amistad Freedom Schooner*, a replica of the original merchant ship, set sail from New Haven, Conn., in 2007 on a trans-Atlantic voyage to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the end of the slave trade. During the ship's month-long stay in Freetown, the embassy held educational programs, film showings and receptions that were covered extensively in local and international media.

As a result of the visit, New Haven—the city where the *Amistad* captives first argued for their freedom—is now linked to Freetown through Sister Cities International.

U.S. Mission

For the past two years, Ambassador Perry has led a mission that hosts 26 Americans and approximately 120 local employees representing the departments of State, Defense and Justice, as well as USAID and the Peace Corps. Americans who secure postings in Freetown can have a powerful impact. Whether by interacting with Ambassador's Girls Scholarship recipients, working on bilateral efforts to combat drug trafficking or serving on the Special Self Help selection committee, they can affect people's lives for years.



Clockwise from above: Office Management Specialist Becky Cheney, standing at right, and the Justice Department's Maude Raysor, center in brown, distributed food and educational materials at a Muslim school as part of the embassy's Ramadan outreach; Franco's hotel serves some of the freshest seafood in Sierra Leone, in a beautiful seaside setting; Africa Command General William Ward, left, visits a Department of State-funded depot that supports the first contingent of Sierra Leonean United Nations peacekeepers, who headed to Darfur this year.

While most Sierra Leoneans live without such basic amenities as 24-hour electricity and running water, American Embassy housing provides the "luxuries" to which Americans are accustomed. Most employees are housed on one of two compounds in spacious apartments with spectacular views of the city and the ocean beyond. Some buildings are somewhat the worse for wear, however, and the management section is acquiring new properties to meet expanding needs. The American International School caters to children from kindergarten through eighth grade in intimate classrooms.

Freetown sits near the tip of a peninsula that juts into the Atlantic Ocean, and a drive along the coast reveals unspoiled white sand



beaches and tiny fishing villages. Weekend activities frequently include a trip to a restaurant or bar on Lumley Beach in Freetown or a one-hour drive to the pristine beaches outside town. At River Number Two, a popular destination, a \$2,500 grant from the Ambassador's Special Self Help Fund in the 1990s was used to develop a thriving tourist business. Serving

the catch of the day to beachgoers, managing a small guest house and maintaining thatched huts for shade, the community association funds the education and health care of every child in the village. Knowing the impact one's tourist dollars have on the local community makes spending a day splashing in the warm ocean even more enjoyable.



At a Glance >>> Sierra Leone



Multilateral Engagement

The Special Court for Sierra Leone was established as a hybrid tribunal by the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone to bring to justice those individuals most responsible for the atrocities committed during the civil war. With the United States as its largest financial supporter, the court has made tremendous strides toward ending impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed not only in Sierra Leone and neighboring Liberia, but across Africa. In its six years of operation, it convicted and sentenced eight of the most notorious war criminals from the conflict. Having handed down final appellate judgments in the last of its Freetown-based trials, the court leaves an enduring legacy in international jurisprudence. It was the first tribunal to recognize and convict for the use of child soldiers and sexual slavery as tools of war, the first to convict for the use of forced marriage as a crime against humanity and the first to convict for attacks on peacekeeping officers as a war crime.

As Sierra Leone moves further from its brutal past into a hopeful future, U.S. engagement will continue to grow. USAID is expected to expand its presence in Sierra Leone, bringing direct-hire Americans to Freetown for the first time since the civil war. In a few months, the first 40 Peace Corps volunteers will begin to teach in the nation's villages. In coming years, the embassy's programs will continue to grow, and the contrasts to the past will become more pronounced. Sierra Leone has emerged from war to become a beacon of hope, stability and democracy. ■

The author is the public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Freetown.

Capital: Freetown

Government type: Republic

Area: 71,740 sq. km.

Comparative area: Slightly smaller than South Carolina

Population: 6.4 million

Languages: English, Krio, Temne, Mende and 15 other indigenous languages

GDP - per capita: \$900

Export commodities: Diamonds, rutile, cocoa, coffee and fish

Export partners: Belgium, United States and India

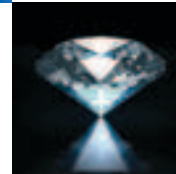
Import commodities: Food, machinery, fuel and chemicals

Import partners: China, Côte d'Ivoire and United States

Currency (code): Leones (SLL)

Internet country code: .sl

Source: Country Background Notes



Corporate Partners

Technology companies aid diplomacy in Iraq /// *By Henry Haggard*

Working with leading U.S. technology firms, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad has made technology a diplomatic tool to overcome a restrictive environment, expand programming and create a new way to interact with the government of Iraq.

Jared Cohen, a member of the Secretary of State's Policy Planning staff, conceived the idea of creating a U.S.-led, public-private partnership involving multiple stakeholders as a way to develop Iraq through technology. The partnership's American arm, called the Support Network for a Digital Iraq, consists largely of U.S. information technology professionals and academics. The corresponding Iraqi organization is the Iraq Technology Task Force.

To launch the partnership and test its effectiveness, the Department of State led a team of nine chief executive officers from information technology companies on a trip to Iraq in April 2009. The team included representatives from Blue State Digital, Google,

YouTube, AT&T, Twitter, Howcast Media Inc., Automattic Inc. and Meetup.

The visitors focused their efforts on the Iraq National Museum. Blue State Digital, for instance, developed a Web site for the museum that could serve as a cultural gateway to Iraq, making the museum's treasures available to the world and encouraging donations to preserve Iraq's unique cultural heritage.

Tech Task Force

The Iraq Technology Task Force was formed in May 2009 to help the support network's partners implement ideas. The task force is anchored by a group of information technology professionals and assisted by students, professors, media and Iraqi government officials. Its members have worked for free in recent months to deliver projects that are expected to increase interest in new media and in the task force's initiatives.

To get under way, the task force and sup-

port network debated how they would work together and which projects deserved priority. Both sides agreed an internship program would be ideal to increase the links between the two nations and develop needed expertise in Iraq. The first six Iraqi information technology interns were scheduled to come to the United States in January for 12-week internships at a participating information technology company. Before and after the internships, they will participate in meetings and seminars in Washington, D.C., and Palo Alto, Calif.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced the partnership in October, saying it was not only going to provide American support but also "help develop the Iraqi capacity to devise their own solutions." The Iraqi interns will be placed in U.S. technology start-ups to expose them to an entrepreneurial spirit and give them skills they will be able to take home.





Iraq Technology Task Force members discuss information technology initiatives at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.



Left: From left are Iraq Technology Task Force member Professor Laith Kadhum of the University of Kufa, information technology internship finalists Sarbast Rashid and Ahmed Ghamim, Google CEO Eric Schmidt, information technology internship finalist Sadeq Shnaishel and Youtube Videographer Sophie Schmidt. **Right:** At the Iraq National Museum are, from left, the author along with Google engineers Matt Williams, Alex Starns and Dan Ratner.

“This represents a new approach to diplomacy that targets a group that will have a major impact on Iraq’s future and the young people of Iraq,” she said.

New Channel

YouTube’s representative to the partnership offered to develop at no cost an Internet channel for the Iraqi government that would provide storage space for video, allow live broadcasts and offer a custom-designed platform for video content. Responding, the Iraqi government in November 2009 launched youtube.com/iraqigov with a speech by the prime minister. The embassy has since worked closely with the Iraqi government and YouTube to overcome language issues, answer technical questions and explain to both parties the culture of the partnered organization. Participants hope the initiative will promote transpar-

ency, openness and innovation in the Iraqi government and among its citizens.

For the museum’s Web site, Google pledged to send engineers to Baghdad to catalog the museum’s artifacts. Three engineers have since spent a week in Iraq taking 14,000 pictures of all artifacts on display in the museum, and the photos will be posted early this year. Howcast Media, meanwhile, is at no cost making a film, “How to Rebuild the Iraq National Museum,” that will encourage donations to support restoration of the museum and preservation of other Iraqi cultural heritage sites.

In November, Trident Capital CEO Don Dixon, Google CEO Eric Schmidt and the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Peter Pace, met with task force members, Iraqi officials and internship finalists. They also toured the museum.

“We’re very excited about coming to Iraq

and helping Iraq with this innovative digital imaging project,” Schmidt said. “I think there’s great potential in this country for high-tech companies to partner with Iraqis on building the Web-based infrastructure needed for economic development and global integration.”

The partnership has led to the development of some exciting new tech-related programs and promoted cooperation between the U.S. and Iraqi governments. Its deliverables show that traditional resources and programs are not the only way to further U.S. goals in Iraq—expertise can be leveraged to help advance common development goals and create sustainable relationships between U.S. and Iraqi individuals and companies. ■

The author is the chief of staff of the public affairs section at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

French Connections

Embassy introduces Parisian firefighters to EMT services /// *By Jan Abbott*

To protect U.S. diplomatic missions abroad, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security must ensure the daily physical security of facilities and personnel and evaluate the local emergency response environment. Each embassy regional security officer, for example, must stay up to date on safety and security conditions specific to the host nation and city, and determine the potential effectiveness of emergency responders in adverse circumstances. As a result, RSO personnel maintain an ongoing liaison with local law enforcement and emergency response organizations to ensure adequate precautions are in place in case of events that

would endanger the health and safety of the mission community.

The regional security office at the U.S. Embassy in Paris learned last year that the law enforcement, fire and civil defense organizations that help protect the embassy did not have first-responders trained as emergency medical technicians or paramedics, roles that save so many lives in the United States.

This is no small matter, since lives are more likely to be saved if victims receive treatment within an hour of their injury, and that often means they must be treated at the scene or on the way to the emergency room. Although most French firefighters are trained in

basic first aid, most ambulances only transport the sick and injured patients to hospitals—they usually do not provide treatment on the scene.

Paris does have some ambulances that can offer on-scene treatment. They are, in essence, mobile emergency rooms, complete with a physician. These ambulances are costly, and there are too few doctors for Paris to simply increase their number.

Help Offered

Because the emergency medical technician concept allows for a greater number of response units and more efficient use of resources, RSO Paris offered to

facilitate the visit of a group of Parisian firefighters and doctors to an emergency medical technician operation in a major U.S. city to learn the elements of that system. The Parisians agreed, and planning got under way for a visit to take place in November 2008.

Fortunately, at about the same time as planning began, a contributing funding source for the trip materialized: BNP Paribas, a French multinational bank that is committed to emergency preparedness. While visiting the bank's Paris branch from his New York headquarters, BNP's head of Corporate Governance and Controls, Bob Coghlan, also visited a local fire station and saw



Frank C. Montagna, center, director of New York City's Fire Training Academy, briefs members of the Paris Fire Department.



Doctors from New York Methodist Hospital meet members of the Paris Fire Department.

how it would respond to the BNP Paribas building in a fire. When Coghlan, who is chief of the sole volunteer fire station that is an active part of the Fire Department of New York, learned of the Parisian firefighters' planned trip, the bank offered to underwrite part of the journey. As regional security officer, I accompanied the group, acting as official liaison between the New York and Parisian firefighters, the bureau and the embassy.

At the New York end, Bernard Johnson, a former DS agent now working as a contractor in the bureau's New York Field Office, helped get the visit approved by the New York Fire Chief's office. In fact, the Parisian firefighters were now seeking an even broader briefing. They wanted to know about the Fire Department of New York's command structure and its decentralized dispatch

system, training methods, fire marshal program, arson investigations, marine operations, fire operations in high-rise buildings and even the "dial-911" concept, which is only now being implemented in Europe.

Ground Zero

They also wanted to visit Ground Zero—and that's where the visit began, on a tour led by a retired New York firefighter who had lost his son, an active-duty New York firefighter, on Sept. 11, 2001. "Let it stop here," he told them, meaning this attack should never be allowed to happen again.

During the visit, the Parisian firefighters discussed firefighting gear with their counterparts and showed the Americans their fire helmets, which are in many ways superior to the traditional U.S. model. The emergency medical aspect of the trip was particularly

well received, with the Parisians being briefed on how the emergency medical technician command structure works, how emergency medical technicians and paramedics are trained and how they operate in conjunction with hospital emergency rooms. They were also given the Fire Department of New York's entire emergency medical technician training syllabus, lists of needed equipment and other information on New York's emergency medical services operation.

The Parisians also toured Methodist Hospital of New York, meeting administrators and emergency room staff who described how the emergency medical technician system works and how it interfaces with emergency room doctors.

From an embassy perspective, everyone benefited. Now the Parisian emergency services

can, if they desire, use the Fire Department of New York's materials to jump-start creation of an emergency medical technician system.

The visit attracted attention at the highest levels of the Paris Town Hall, the city's governing body. The embassy's political and public diplomacy goals also were advanced, as was its security profile. On the public diplomacy side, the visit may serve to help expand political links between New York City and Paris. Fundamentally, the visit enhanced ties between the Paris firefighters and the embassy and helped France advance its pre-hospital medical care efforts. ■

The author was regional security officer at the U.S. Embassy in Paris and is now the division chief for High Threat Protection with the Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

Peacekeepers' Partner

Pol-Mil Office Helps Strengthen U.S. Allies ///
By David McKeeby and Christopher M. Upchurch

Two members of the UN's peacekeeping force patrol during a community meeting in Darfur.



As the United States seeks new ways to effectively integrate diplomacy, development and defense to address international security challenges, the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs' traditional role as the Department of State's primary link to the Department of Defense has made a typical workday in the bureau's Office of Plans, Policy and Analysis more exciting than ever.

"Secretary Clinton's foreign policy vision serves as a diplomatic force multiplier, strengthening and deepening partnerships within our own government and overseas," said Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs Andrew Shapiro. "PPA's security assistance and capacity-building programs are central to our efforts to reinvigorate America's bedrock alliances while reaching out to new partners."

The office's 33-member staff manages more than \$5 billion a year in security assistance funds, facilitates the training of foreign peacekeepers, contributes diplomatic perspectives to DOD strategic planning and even coordinates the U.S. role in international efforts against piracy in the waters off Somalia.

Spanning Continents

"Our programs span continents and issue areas but all focus on strengthening U.S. friends and allies to meet shared security challenges," said the office's director, Kevin O'Keefe.

O'Keefe said the office's programs of military assistance spending—Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and Peacekeeping Operations—represent approximately 15 percent of the Department's Foreign Operations budget and have paid long-term dividends in more than 135 countries. The programs provide partner nations with training and equipment, allow these countries' armed forces to work more effectively as U.S. coalition partners, and serve in place of U.S. forces. They also promote American values such as respect for human rights and civilian control of the military.

The Foreign Military Financing program provides U.S. defense articles, services and training to more than 85 countries. The program focuses on Israel, Egypt, Pakistan and Jordan. It has also helped Lebanon build its armed forces into an institution of national unity, supported a new professional military force for post-conflict Liberia, promoted military reform and the improved responsiveness to disaster in Indonesia and the Philippines, and provided military assistance to help Mexico's military fight narcotics.

The International Military Education and Training program helps professionalize and train foreign militaries by sending up-and-coming military officers and enlisted personnel from more than 135 countries to U.S. military schools. The officers take career development courses and learn key technical skills, and are exposed to American life, gaining the chance to forge lifelong relationships and professional ties with their U.S. counterparts.

The Peacekeeping Operations funds provide training, equipment and logistical support to peacekeeping missions from organizations other than the United Nations, including the African Union mission in Somalia and the Multinational Force and Observers presence on the Egypt-Israeli border.

Peacekeeping

The Peacekeeping Operations funds also enhance nations' peacekeeping capabilities through the Global Peace Operations Initiative, increase counterterrorism capabilities through the Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership and East Africa Regional Strategic Initiative, and support military reform in countries emerging from conflict.

The Global Peace Operations Initiative is especially notable. The objective of the initiative's first phase, fiscal years 2005 through 2009, was to train at least 75,000 additional peacekeepers worldwide by 2010. It also aimed to support the 2004 plan of the Group of Eight nations to expand its global capability for peace support operations.

By the end of 2009, more than 90,000 foreign peacekeepers were trained. The program has also facilitated the deployment of more than 66,000 peacekeepers to 20 United Nations and regional peace support operations.

The initiative's second phase, from fiscal year 2010 to 2014, shifts the focus from direct training by U.S. trainers to increasing the capabilities of partner countries to train peacekeepers indigenously. This will let the initiative further multiply the number of future

Below: Office Director Kevin O'Keefe, left, convenes a staff meeting, working with Deputy Director Tom Washburn. **Bottom:** Foreign Affairs Officers Jennifer Hanley, left, and Chris Upchurch share a laugh over the model U.N. peacekeeper soldiers on the arm of Hanley's chair. A former office intern had painted blue the helmets of several plastic "little green Army men," affecting their change of allegiance.





Top: Members of the office staff engage in pre-meeting discussions. **Above:** Foreign Affairs Officer Aiyaz Husain, left, discusses a matter with Michael Larmas Smith, program director for the office's Global Peace Initiative.

peacekeeping forces and empower U.S. partners to strengthen their roles in increasing and sustaining peace.

The office also has the lead role in the Department regarding DOD's Section 1206 funds, which train and equip foreign military forces to assist counterterrorism efforts or participate in U.S. stability operations. The office also works closely with DOD to train and equip Afghan and Iraqi security forces. In Pakistan, the office plays a key role in implementing the new Pakistan Counterinsurgency Capabilities Fund, which will enhance the ability of Pakistan's Army and Frontier Corps to deal with violent extremism.

Coordination Role

Beyond capacity-building, the office works with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff and the regional combatant commands to help ensure U.S. defense policies are consonant with U.S. foreign policy. In addition, the office provides foreign policy input into the formulation of DOD's global policies, strategies and planning efforts. It does so by coordinating the participation and input of the Department's bureaus and the U.S. Agency for International Development into DOD's strategic planning processes.

The office also works with USAID, DOD and other agencies on developing a comprehensive approach to security sector reform, which seeks to help nations create the institutional culture and administrative frameworks necessary to build effective judicial systems and security services. For instance, the office leads the Interagency Counterinsurgency Initiative, which brings together expertise from across the U.S. government to develop means to strengthen partner nations that are threatened by insurgencies. The initiative recently published the U.S. Government Counterinsurgency Guide, the first interagency counterinsurgency document since the early 1960s.

In Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, both initiatives have contributed toward U.S. efforts to assist partner governments to provide effective, legitimate and accountable security for their citizens.

Battling Piracy

The office also is helping the United States respond to the new security threat of piracy in the waters off the Horn of Africa. In this role, it supports Senior Coordinator for Counter-Piracy Robert Maggi, who coordinates counter-piracy efforts within the Department and, with DOD, co-chairs the interagency Counter-Piracy Steering Group.

Internationally, the office is the de facto secretariat of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, a partnership of more than 50 nations and international organizations that includes representatives from the shipping industry. Founded in January 2009, the Contact Group has made significant progress in encouraging contributions to regional naval patrols from the United States and more than 20 other countries, including contingents from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, European Union, Russia, China and India.

Moving forward, the United States continues to encourage its international partners to adopt such counter-piracy priorities as implementing best management practices in commercial fleets to minimize vessels' vulnerability to pirate attacks, discouraging ransom payments to pirates, prosecuting pirates in national courts when national ships and crews are attacked and supporting regional capacity-building programs to prevent pirate attacks and prosecute pirates and their enablers.

"The ultimate aims of the United States are to work with the international community to stabilize Somalia and ensure regional security," said Assistant Secretary Shapiro. "Through the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, we can help to eliminate the pirates' financial incentives, enable prosecutions of pirates and secure the seaways off the Horn of Africa." ■

David McKeeby is a public affairs specialist, and Christopher M. Upchurch is a foreign affairs officer in the Office of Plans, Policy and Analysis.

Getting SMART

FSI Offers PS530 SMART Messaging: A Course for Users



SMART messaging, a major change in how the Department will conduct its business, will soon be available to OpenNet and ClassNet users.

SMART—the State Messaging and Archive Retrieval Toolset—application replaces the existing e-mail and cable programs with a single Microsoft Outlook-based system. With SMART, e-mails and cables can be sent from Outlook. SMART also provides an additional message type, the “record” e-mail, which allows for the archiving of information with long-term value.

The SMART Search function allows any user to search for and retrieve archived messages, record e-mails and cables from the Archive. However, the messages displayed for review are controlled by the permissions set up for the role of the employee doing the search.

In case SMART messaging sounds complicated, the Foreign Service Institute has announced the availability of distance learning course PS530, SMART Messaging: A Course for Users. The course is designed to provide all State Department OpenNet and ClassNet users with accessible, effective training in the use of SMART.

The 90-minute course provides users with information on:

- Purpose and value of SMART and definitions of associated terminologies.
- Difference between working messages and archived messages.
- Steps to create a working message with assigned classification and sensitivity markings.
- Definition of when a message possesses long-term value and must be stored.
- Steps to build an archive message with assigned tags and captions, and to

release the archive message.

- Features of SMART messaging: For the Record, Messages Directly Addressed, Requesting a Read or Delivery Receipt (new), Archive Message Templates, Clearance and Approval Feature.

FSI encourages employees to apply for this course by clicking on: <http://fsi.state.gov/admin/reg/default.asp?EventID=PS530>. Questions about it should be directed to the FSI Registrar Office (fsiregistrar@state.gov).

Prior to SMART’s deployment to a bureau or post, FSI will provide instructor-led training to through a new course, PS531 (SMART End-User Training). Completion of this second 90-minute course prepares employees to use SMART. For more information and to submit a training request when your office is scheduled, please visit <http://fsi.state.gov/admin/reg/default.asp?EventID=PS531>. ■



U.S. Ambassador to Australia

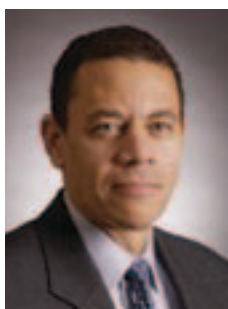
Jeffrey L. Bleich of California, a lawyer, is the new U.S. Ambassador to Australia. Previously, he served as special counsel to the President. Before that, he was a litigation partner with a law firm in San Francisco. He has a long-standing commitment to international law. He was special

rapporteur to the International Court of Arbitration and assisted the special prosecutor for the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. He taught international human rights and has written and lectured on the international criminal court.



U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand

David Huebner of California, a lawyer, is the new U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand, to serve concurrently as Ambassador to Samoa. Previously, he headed the China practice of Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton. Based in Shanghai, he specialized in international arbitration and mediation. Before that, he was an adjunct law professor and chairman of an international law firm where he founded a program to support children's education and welfare charities through the firm's offices around the world.



U.S. Representative to the European Union

William E. Kennard of the District of Columbia, an executive and government official, is the new U.S. Representative to the European Union with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, he was a global partner and managing director of The Carlyle

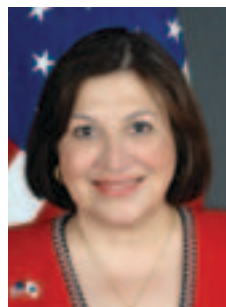
Group, a private equity firm, where he specialized in investments in the telecommunications and media sectors. Before that, he was chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, where he promoted the benefits of technology worldwide. He is married and has a son.



Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues

Robert R. King of Virginia, a Capitol Hill staffer, is the new Special Envoy on North Korean Human Rights Issues with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, he worked on Capitol Hill for 25 years, primarily as chief of staff to Congressman Tom Lantos

(D-Calif.). He concurrently worked for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, most recently as staff director. He was heavily involved in establishing the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and played a key role in passage of the 2004 North Korean Human Rights Act.



U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States

Carmen Lomellin of Virginia, a former OAS, federal and local official, is the new U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States with the rank of Ambassador. Previously, she was executive secretary of the Inter-American Commission of Women for OAS, providing guidance to member states on hemispheric policy advancing issues affecting women. Before that, she held several positions in the Clinton White House and worked for Chicago Mayor Richard Daley.



U.S. Ambassador to Estonia

Michael C. Polt of Tennessee, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Estonia. Previously, he was acting assistant secretary and principal deputy assistant secretary in

the Bureau of Legislative Affairs. He served as ambassador to Serbia and Montenegro. Other postings include Berlin, Bern, Panama City, Bonn, Mexico City, Copenhagen and Bremen. He is married and has two children.



U.S. Ambassador to Micronesia

Peter Alan Prahar of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia. Previously, he was transnational crime officer in Moscow. Before that, he was

director of the Office of Asian, African and European Programs in the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. Other postings include China, Japan, Albania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Kosovo. He is married.



U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg

Cynthia Stroum of Washington, a businesswoman and philanthropist, is the new U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg. She has been a private investor and commercial television producer. A managing partner or managing member of companies involved with

theatrical productions, she co-produced a Tony Award-nominated Broadway show. Her philanthropic work has been for organizations dealing with health, the arts and other areas. She has contributed to several political campaigns, including Obama for America.



U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine

John F. Tefft of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, is the new U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine. Previously, he was ambassador to Georgia. He has also been ambassador to Lithuania, deputy chief of mission and chargé d'affaires in Moscow, and deputy assistant secretary for European

and Eurasian Affairs. Other postings include Jerusalem, Budapest and Rome. He is married and has two daughters.



Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs

Arturo A. Valenzuela of the District of Columbia, a Latin America specialist, is the new Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs. Previously, he was professor of government and director of the Center for Latin American Studies

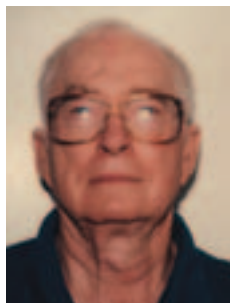
in the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. His specialties were democratic governance, Latin American politics and U.S.-Latin American relations. During the Clinton Administration, he held high-level positions dealing with inter-American affairs at the National Security Council and State Department.



U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy

Philip L. Verveer of the District of Columbia, a lawyer, was accorded the rank of Ambassador during his term as Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Economic, Energy and Business Affairs and

U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy. He has practiced communications and antitrust law in the government and private practice for more than 35 years. He has worked for the Department of Justice, Federal Trade Commission and Federal Communications Commission.



Ben L. Ellington, 84, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 4 of complications from Parkinson's disease in Linden, Texas. He served in the Navy during World War II. He joined the U.S. Information Agency in 1960 and served in Buenos Aires, New Delhi and Mexico City. After retirement, he returned to his hometown of Linden. He was active in community affairs and Boy Scouts and enjoyed traveling.



Russell C. Heater, 89, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Dec. 20 in Springfield, Va. After serving in the Army, he joined the Department in 1948 and served until 1980. His initial assignments were Munich and Berlin, where he met and married his wife Arlene, also a State Department employee, during the airlift. Subsequent postings included Melbourne, Port-au-Prince, Leopoldville, Paris and Nairobi. He dedicated his final years to

travel, reading and fine art.

Genevieve M. Hylaman, 82, wife of retired Foreign Service officer Roy E. Hylaman, died Dec. 3 of cancer at her home in Annandale, Va. She met her husband while serving as a secretary at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria and accompanied him on assignments to Prague, Karachi, Pretoria again, Manila and Paris. She retired to Annandale.



Guy C. Johnson, 74, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Aug. 18 of cardiopulmonary arrest at his home in Roseville, Calif. He joined the Department in 1966 and was posted to Santo Domingo, Prague, Paris, Tokyo, Mexico, Bonn and Beijing. He retired to California in 1995. He was an avid reader and loved swimming, biking and traveling.

William Jorden, 85, a former ambassador, died recently in New Bedford, Mass. He had lung cancer. He was a *New York Times* reporter and Pulitzer Prize winner before joining the Department's Policy Planning Council in 1961. He became a special assistant to Under Secretary for Political Affairs Averell Harriman and was a member of the U.S. delegation to the Vietnam peace talks in Paris. He was ambassador to Panama in the 1970s. He moved to Massachusetts from his longtime home in McLean, Va., in 2007.



Harriet Frazier Cheston Klosson, 86, widow of former Foreign Service officer Boris Hansen Klosson, died Dec. 4 of complications following a fall in Bethesda, Md. She accompanied her husband to postings in Moscow, Kingston and Geneva for the SALT II talks. In recent years, she tutored children in elementary schools in Montgomery County, Md. Her son, former Ambassador Michael Klosson, is also a retired Foreign Service officer.



Owen Lea, 7, son of Information Technical Manager Randy Lea, died Aug. 26 of neuroblastoma, a rare childhood cancer which he courageously fought for six years. He was born in Pretoria during his father's Foreign Service tour there. Close friends of the family have established the Owen Lea Foundation to help families deal with the hardships that accompany cancer therapies. More information is at www.owenleafoundation.org.



Wells Stabler, 90, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 13 of heart failure in Washington, D.C. He was ambassador to Spain after the death of dictator Francisco Franco and helped that country transition to democracy. He also served in Jerusalem, Amman, Rome and Paris. After his retirement in 1987, he worked for the German Marshall Fund and as a Department inspector. He was a volunteer at the Phillips Collection.



James M. Wilson Jr., 91, a retired Foreign Service officer, died Nov. 15 in Washington, D.C. He had heart disease. He served in the Army during World War II. He joined the Department in 1957 and served in Paris, Madrid, Bangkok and Manila. He established the Department's human rights program and became its first coordinator. After retiring in 1978, he recorded books for the blind and monitored trails for the C&O Canal Association.

Retirements

Foreign Service

Bolton, Deborah Anne
 Bryant, Patricia K.
 Coulter Jr., Frank J.
 Coviello, Cheryl
 Estell Jr., Wilson N.
 Gilroy, Mary Ellen T.
 Granger, Robert G.
 Haynes, Richard Dale
 Hill, Marguerite
 Kelly, Douglas G.
 Kramer, Richard E.
 Lambert, George G.
 Lee, Peter Inho
 Loftis, Robert Geers
 Malinowski, Michael E.
 Martin, Joanne M.
 McCollum, Portia Elizabeth
 McCumber, Robert P.
 McDermott, James P.
 Mejia Jr., Carlos F.
 Moon, Jeffrey A.
 O'Keefe, Mary Monica
 Raezer, Thomas Charles
 Rinella Jr., Joseph L.
 Schreiber Hughes, Lisa Bobbie
 Shippy, John D.
 Sibert, Alonzo
 Stricker, Carol L.
 Williard, James G.

Civil Service

Dodson, David Livingston
 Jackson, Malinda W.

Working Partnerships

Whatever it's called—synergy, partnership, cooperation—there's no doubt that the spirit of working together has sprouted and grown within the Department recently. You'll find in this issue several instances of Department efforts to multiply its effectiveness and advance its core mission by working with other government agencies.

For example, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, searching for ways to use technology as a diplomacy tool, partnered with the Secretary's Policy Planning staff to create a public-private partnership to help develop Iraq through technology. The partnership's American arm—the Support Network for a Digital Iraq—includes U.S. information technology professionals and academics. Initial reports indicate that the partnership has already helped develop promising new tech-related programs and promoted cooperation between the U.S. and Iraqi governments.

When flooding and mudslides damaged or destroyed more than 1,500 homes in El Salvador, the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador wasted no time in convening the Country Team, which included representatives from the Agency for International Development and the Department of Defense, to coordinate assistance efforts. Embassy officials immediately contacted and began working with DOD's U.S. Southern Command's Joint Task Force-Bravo, which provides humanitarian assistance and disaster relief throughout Central America. In less than two weeks, the tripartite partnership ensured that thousands of people in El Salvador received essential relief supplies and medical assistance.



The scene was ominous: U.S. Marines in full battle gear spilling out of combat helicopters on the front lawn of the ambassador's residence at the U.S. Embassy in Dili. In reality, however, it was a drill, part of the embassy's joint effort with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit to simulate a noncombatant evacuation. The exercise allowed embassy staff and the Marines to practice an actual evacuation and to improve the registration information and tools for contacting Americans.

The U.S. constitution guarantees a free press, a privilege Americans often take for granted. For Iraqi citizens, for many years a free press was little more than a dream. Women, especially, had little voice in or access to what passed for the press in Saddam's Iraq. In at least one city, that changed with help from the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Basrah. The PRT helped establish a bimonthly newspaper named *Al-Jenubiyia* (Southern Woman) that tackles women's issues and topics that other media tend to neglect. One male Iraqi reader calls the newspaper "a significant voice of concern for the human rights of women."

Last but not least, a final salute to our colleagues en route to their final posting: Ben L. Ellington; Russell C. Heater; Genevieve M. Hylaman; Guy C. Johnson; William Jordan; Harriet Frazier Cheston Klosson; Owen Lea;

Wells Stabler; and James M. Wilson Jr. ■

Rob Wiley
Rob Wiley
Editor-in-Chief

COMING IN MARCH

>>> CG Vancouver Prepares for Winter Olympics >>>

>>> Embassy Kuwait Helps Heal Old Wounds

>>> FLO Addresses Overseas Staffing Gaps

... and much more!



NEW DECADE AT STATE: WHAT'S IN AND OUT



Out

- Coveting popular postings
- I.D. badges
- Country Team meetings
- Delta barriers
- Talking points
- Dreamy vampires
- Sensitive But Unclassified
- Short-sleeve dress shirts
- Demarches on policy issues
- Surreptitious Blackberry during meetings
- SA-58

- Counter-Cupcake Proliferation
- Speaking foreign languages well
- Forward-leaning decision memos
- Obsequiousness
- Effective Strategic Planning framework
- Displaying your Meritorious Superiority Awards
- Regional Bureaus
- Micromanaging subordinates
- Empty flattery of Ambassador Bluestone



In

- Laying low in Embassy Iekystan
- Clearance cowbells
- Country Team cage matches
- Drawbridges
- Primal screaming points
- Supernatural Special Assistants
- Insensitive But Still All That
- Traditional pantaloons from previous posting
- Demarches on hygiene issues
- Accordion accompaniment for briefings
- SA-92

- Special Envoy for Bear Claw Affairs
- Speaking English poorly, but loudly
- Robust policy tweets
- Odiousness
- "Foreign Affairs Manual: The Musical!"
- Yodeling your award nominations
- Regional dance competitions
- Intimidating colleagues with helper monkeys
- Oh, but he's just so plenipotentiary!



AUGUST 2010



U.S. Department of State
Bureau of Human Resources
Washington, DC 20520

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